THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

Abolition of CST on ATF

2172. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have abolished Central Sales Tax (CST) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) for designated Indian Carriers flying abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this CST on ATF shall have to be paid for domestic flights;

(d) whether his ministry has requested the Ministry of Finance to give some relief on ATF cost for domestic flights also;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the reaction of the Ministry of Finance thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Finance Bill, 2005 proposes to amend Section 5 of CST Act, 1956 to declare sale of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to designated Indian carriers for their international operations as 'deemed export'.

(c) Yes Sir.

(d) to (f) Ministry of Finance was requested to notify ATF as 'Declared Goods' under Section 14 of the Central Sales Tax Act, which provides a list of goods which are of special importance in inter-State trade and commerce and caps the maximum rate of sales tax at 4%. So far, ATF sold to turbo-prop aircraft only has been notified as 'Declared Goods'.

Direct air service between Bagdogra and Mumbai/Kathmandu

2173. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a public demand to have direct flights between Bagdogra and Kathmandu and Bagdogra and Mumbai; and

(b) if so, the decisions of Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Requests have been received for introduction of flight between Bagdogra and Kathmandu. However, due to operational constraints at Bagdogra Airport as well as constraints of aircraft availability. Indian Airlines is unable to consider introduction of flights between Bagdogra and Kathmandu at present.

As regards air services on domestic sectors, Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country including North-Eastern region. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. As such, the airlines are free to operate anywhere in the country subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government.

Passenger friendly amenities at airports

2174. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to make the International tourists more comfortable and passenger-friendly at our airports;

(b) whether it is a fact that our infrastructure as well as hospitality quotients have found themselves unprepared to meet rising inflow of tourists;

(c) whether Government have any contingency plants to meet these fast growing infrastructure requirements; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) At all major international airports namely, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Bangalore. Ahmedabad and Goa, user friendly facilities are provided. These facilities are upgraded continuously to ensure that the terminal buildings are more passenger friendly and international tourists are able to receive more courteous services.